

# STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN NIGERIA: 2007–2019

## Findings from an Election Management Bodies Assessment

### FINDINGS

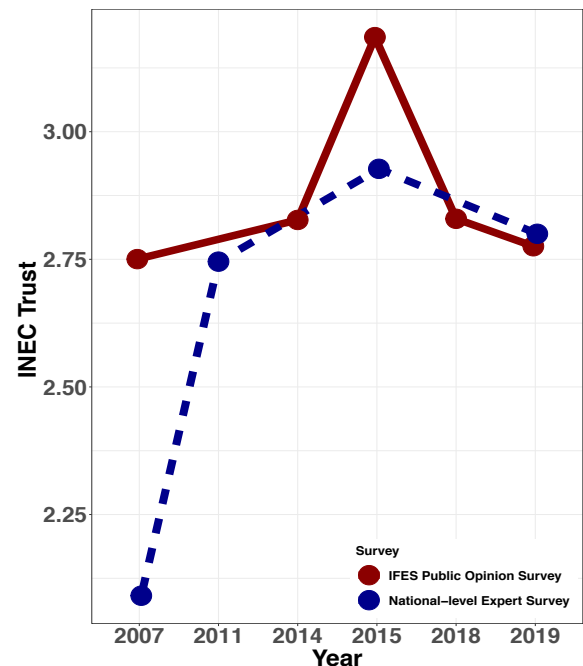
#### TRUST IN INEC SINCE THE 2007 ELECTION

- For the general public, there was an increase in confidence in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) between the 2007 and 2015 elections, after which trust in INEC declined.
- Among national experts, however, trust increased regarding the 2011 elections compared to 2007 and then remained relatively steady regarding elections from 2011 to 2019.
- The views of key informants (stakeholders) interviewed, who universally perceived substantial overall increases in trust in INEC since 2007, more closely mirrored the trends in trust among national experts than the public.

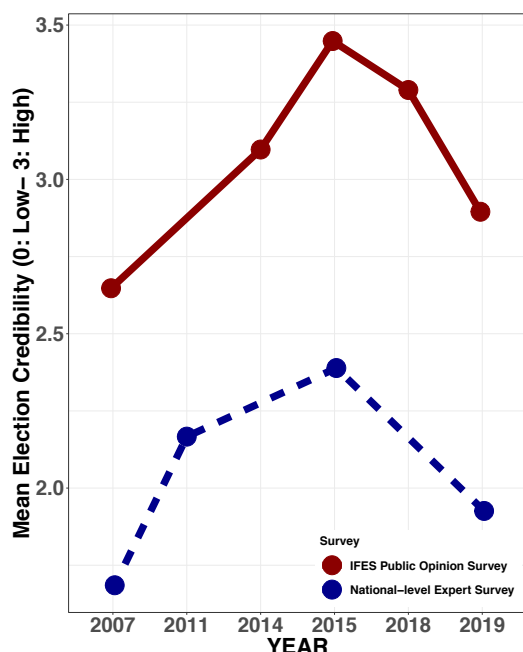
Stakeholders credited the upward trend in trust in INEC to multiple factors:

- increased independence of INEC resulting from legal and administrative reforms that were implemented beginning in 2010.
- the willingness of INEC to reform its processes and better organize its work, including a greater commitment to transparency and inclusivity in its management of elections.

*Level of Trust in INEC, 2007-2019*



*Perceptions of Election Credibility, 2007-2019*



#### TRUST IN ELECTORAL PROCESS CREDIBILITY SINCE THE 2007 ELECTION

- Perceptions of election credibility track closely with levels of trust in INEC.
- In contrast to the fluctuations in perceptions of overall election credibility, respondents felt that INEC's ability to administer elections continued to increase with each election.
- There was also consensus that, over time, INEC's results were more reflective of voters' choices as measured by Parallel Vote Tabulations (PVTs) conducted by CSOs.

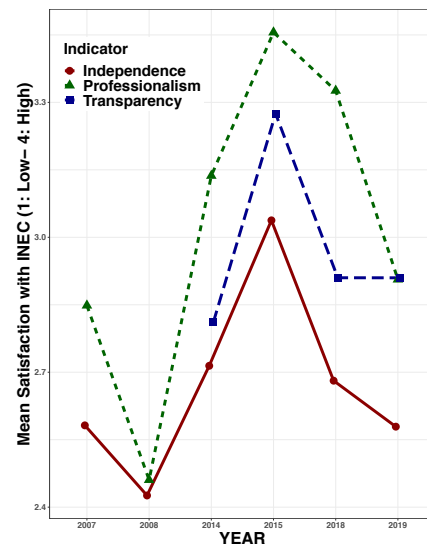
Stakeholders interviewed believed that elections were increasingly credible in Nigeria, but that election credibility could be diminished by factors including:

- how candidates were selected by parties;
- poor operations and logistics;
- a lack of security; and
- how court decisions affected election outcomes.

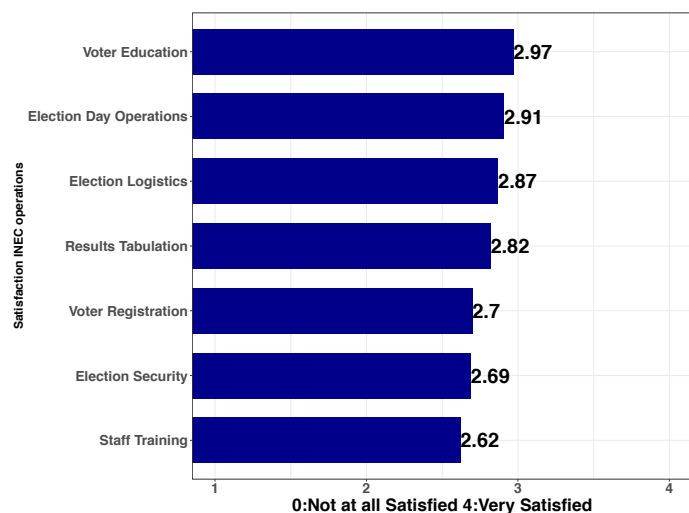
## SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF INEC'S WORK

- Public evaluation of INEC independence, professionalism, and transparency increased from 2007 to a peak in 2015, before falling close to the pre-2007 level following the 2019 elections.
- INEC's professionalism was often ranked highest while its independence was often ranked lowest.
- National experts' recalled evaluations of independence, professionalism, and transparency all increased regarding the 2011 elections compared to 2007.
- While their recalled perceptions of INEC's professionalism and transparency remained relatively unchanged for the 2015 and 2019 elections, their recalled evaluation of independence increased to its highest level in 2015 and fell in 2019.
- Stakeholders interviewed also associated greater credibility of elections with INEC's increased professionalism and competencies, especially regarding planning; election day staffing; and mastery of logistics, equipment, and personnel deployment.
- Stakeholders expressed some dissatisfaction with INEC's results tabulation and collation processes.
- The introduction of new technologies was also closely associated with increased credibility and trust in electoral processes.
- Respondents also felt that INEC has communicated better on electoral timelines, key events, challenges, and results since 2007. Where INEC has not communicated with the public, civil society, political parties, and others, it has harmed election credibility.

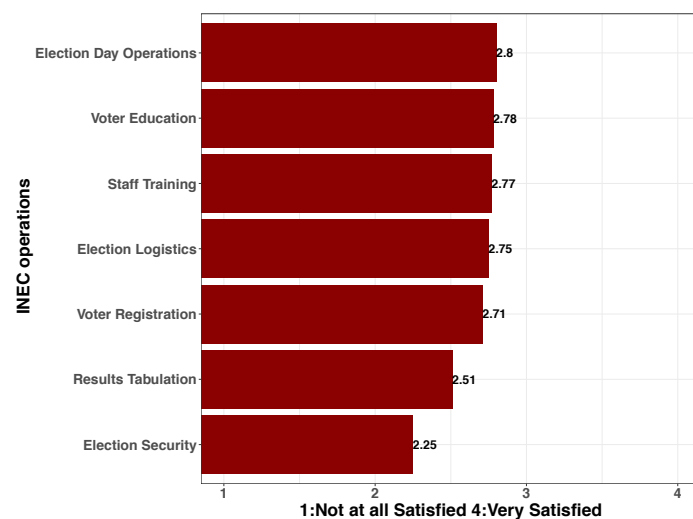
Perceptions of INEC's Independence, Professionalism, and Transparency, 2007-2019



State Expert Survey: Satisfaction with INEC Operations



National Expert Survey: Satisfaction with INEC Operations



## ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The Cloudburst Group conducted an assessment for USAID/Nigeria to understand and assess the performance of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) in Nigeria over the past decade, with a focus on the period corresponding to USAID's Support for Electoral Reforms Project (SERP). This assessment took place from June-October 2020, and included a thorough desk review and remote field research, including both interviews of key informants, surveys of national- and state-level elections experts, and analysis of existing International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) public opinion survey data.

The assessment (see [full findings report](#)) answers four key research questions:

- How have stakeholder perceptions of the electoral process in Nigeria changed from 2007 to 2019? (Summarized above.)
- How have the INEC's and State Independent Electoral Commissions' management and administration of elections since 2007 impacted electoral integrity? (Summarized in "[Stakeholder Perceptions of Elections Integrity in Nigeria: 2007-2019](#).")
- What investments in INEC, SIECs, and other stakeholders made by SERP have been the most effective in improving electoral integrity and the quality of elections in Nigeria? (Summarized in "[USAID / Nigeria Activities and Opportunities](#).")
- What are the opportunities for USAID/Nigeria to invest strategically in election management and administration moving forward? (Summarized in "[USAID / Nigeria Activities and Opportunities](#).")